DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 262 507 EC 180 915

AUTHOR	Willings, David
TITLE	Career Search for the Gifted and Talented. 1985 Digest.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, Reston, Va.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	85
CONTRACT	400-84-0010
NOTE	3p.
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children, 1920 Association Dr., Reston, VA 22091 (one free copy).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Career Education; *Career Exploration; Elementary Secondary Education; *Gifted; Parent Participation; Talent
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

Problems and issues in career education and career search for gifted and talented children are examined. The special problems of gifted and talented students in this area are noted, including early readiness for career search and restrictiveness of the career search process for multitalented students. Problems in the career choice process are considered, such as lack of concern for jobs' hidden factors and confusion between problems of the job and problems of training. The importance of encouraging parent involvement is stressed. Other influences beyond those of parents are listed, including positive or negative experiences with other jobs, overcompensation, and personal interests. The importance of understanding students' natural roles (indominus, exdominus, exemplar, and eccentric) is noted. The balance between drives to be somebody and to do something worthwhile is explored. A list of resources on the topic concludes the digest. (CL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

1985
DIGEST

FD262507

CAREER SEARCH FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

Over the past 25 years career education has emerged as a legitimate and acceptable discipline. There is still limited awareness that conventional career education methods may be of little or no assistance to the gifted and talented.

What Are the Special Problems in Career Search for the Gifted and Talented?

- Many of the gifted and talented were ready for career search by the age of 9. Presented with this material at 14-16 their reaction is "I was there years ago. I need something more sophisticated now."
- Many gifted children have unconventional career aspirations for which they are often ridiculed by peers and even teachers and parents.
- A proportion of gifted children are multitalented and career choice is seen as a restrictive process. Results of interest tests can be misleading for the multitalented.*
- Parents often see the gifted child as a status symbol and the child's career choice can be a way of meeting parents' needs.
- Many gifted children are motivated not to succeed but to avoid at all costs the dreadful *shibboleth* of failure.
- Many gifted children, alienated at school expect to be alienated at work and arbitrarily reject careers which could offer them some fulfillment.
- Jobs are becoming more and more programmed. Many gifted children will not find one job which can utilize their profound and diverse talents.

What are the Pitfalls in Career Choice for the Gifted and Talented?

- Too many career choices are based on *the image of the job*. It is essential to consider the *hidden factors*. For example the image of a museum curator's job was described by a gifted student as *animate fossils looking after inanimate fossils and stopping kids sticking chewing gum on exhibits*. In fact the hidden factors of museum work call for high administrative, research, and people contact skills.
- *Problems of the job* and *problems of training* are confused. For example no one should reject a career in medicine because he or she cannot tolerate the sight of blood. This is a *problem of training*. With training, the aversion can be overcome. On the other hand a young person who wears glasses could not become a pilot in the Air Force. This is a *problem of the job*. Very often what are perceived as problems of the job are, in fact, problems of training.
- *Difficulties and distastes* are not properly documented. Often young people find that they cannot handle the difficulties and distastes when they have expended several years of training and find themselves in a job.
- It is part of Anglo-Saxon culture to think of the person at the top as successful and having "made it." Many young people, a large proportion impelled by their parents, are striving for a role to which they are temperamentally unsuited.

*Elizabeth Meckstroth has designed a program for "High school students who can do anything." She focuses on interpersonal situations, careers which *expand* options, and the moral and philosophical value of what we are doing. Further information from Elizabeth Meckstroth, 259 East Stroop Road, Dayton, Ohio 45429.

To What Extent Should Parents Be Involved?

Parents *are* involved. Most major research on career choice shows that parental influence, either positive or negative, is the strongest single influence on career choice. The importance of parents, the teacher, and the child working together as a team cannot be overestimated. Parental influence can sabotage or enhance the career educator's best efforts. Many parents are only too eager for guidance.

Besides Parental Influence What Other Influences Affect Career Choice?

- School influence—occasionally positive but frequently negative.
- Experiences with actual jobs—these also can be positive or negative.
- Chance factors.
- Situational factors—things outside the control of the counselor or the student but which affect career choice.
- Inadequate or faulty information.
- Overcompensation.
- Personal interest—this is often regarded as an intruder. It should always be the starting point.
- Second string choices—choices made as an alternative to what the child really wants to do.

When Are Natural Roles Observable?

With many children their natural roles are observable by the age of 8. Clearly a child's natural role affects the type of career that should be considered. The roles are:

- Indominus—controls the groups from within. The vice-principal of a school is usually the indominus.

ED 180515

- **Exdominus**—represents the group to those outside it. The principal is usually the exdominus.
- **Exemplar**—has authority because of knowledge central to the group's activities. The coach of a field hockey team has authority because of his or her knowledge of the game.
- **Eccentric**—has authority by virtue of specialized knowledge. In the specialized area the eccentric's authority can be absolute. Suppose a player in a field hockey team is a nurse. Normally this player is one among eleven. But suppose a player is injured. The nurse field hockey player will take charge and give orders which will be obeyed without question.

Because we tend to think of the exdominus as a successful person who has "made it," many gifted children strive for the exdominus role when their natural role is that of exemplar or eccentric.

What Should Be the Objective of Career Counseling for the Gifted and Talented?

Most people are motivated by two parallel drives: *the drive to be somebody* and *the drive to do something worthwhile*. Both these drives must be equally satisfied. The number of eminent people who have died by their own hand shows that to be somebody will only be a source of stress to the person who does not also have a sense of doing something worthwhile. Where both drives are not equally gratified, frustration, loss of personal effectiveness, burnout, and even suicide are the results. Anglo-Saxon cultures continue to place too much emphasis on being somebody. The gifted and talented are particularly susceptible to this demand. From an early age they are seen as people likely to be somebody. There is a need to redress the balance and help the gifted and talented do something worthwhile as well. Before they can do that, they need to find what is worthwhile for them. Anglo-Saxon values lead us to think of money, status and related benefits as the reward for our work. Gifted children need to be helped to think of their talents as the currency with which they buy money and status and answer the question *is the price right?*

RESOURCES

Dauw, (1966). Personality self-description of original thinkers and good elaborators. *Psychology in the Schools, 3*, 76-78.

Miller, A. (1981). *Prisoners of childhood*. New York: Basic Books.

Miner, J.B. (1964). *The management of ineffective performance*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Napolitano, H.S. (1979). Parents of the gifted lag. *Creative Child and Adult Quarterly, 4*(1), 58-61.

Paterson, T.T. (1955). *Morale in war and work*. London: Parrish.

Patterson, T.T. (1972). *Management theory*. London: Business Publications.

Roeper, A. (1982). How the gifted cope with their emotions. *Roeper Review, 5*(2), 21-23.

Rossi, J. & Digenakis, P. (1980). Conflict and compromise: A simulation game. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 3*(3), 151-156.

Super, D.E. (1957). *The psychology of careers*. New York: Harper and Brothers.

Torrance, E.P. (1979). Gifted children of the future: Predictions and proposed solutions. In J.J. Gallagher (Ed.), *Gifted children: Reaching their potential*. New York: Trillium Press.

Willings, D. (1968). *The human element in management*. London: B.T. Batsford.

Willings, D. (1980). *The creatively gifted*. Cambridge: Woodhead-Faulkner. (Distributed in U.S.A. by Ohio Psychology Publishing, Columbus, Ohio).

Willings, D. (1983). Issues in career choice for gifted students. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 15*(4), 226-233.

Willings, D. (1983). Group roles and the gifted. *Roeper Review, 5*(3), 18-20.

Willings, D. (1984). Considerations in counselling the creatively gifted. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling 7*, 3-15.

Willings, D. (1984). *Enriched career search*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 247 740).

Details of workshops on Enriched Career Search for teachers and counselors can be obtained from the Office of Special and External Programs, University of Maine at Presque Isle, 181 Main Street, Presque Isle, Maine 04769.

Developed by Dr. David Willings, Professor and Student Counselor, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N.B., Canada.

ERIC Digests are in the public domain and may be freely reproduced and disseminated.

The National Institute of Education

This publication was prepared with funding from the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education, under contract no. NIE-400-84-0030. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of NIE or the Department of Education.